



CONNECTICUT
STATE COUNCIL

SERVICE EMPLOYEES
INTERNATIONAL UNION
CTW, CLC

Testimony of Paul Filson Director of SEIU-CT State
Council in favor of

**HB 5632 AN ACT CONCERNING THE
OPERATION OF A NURSING HOME
INVOLVED IN LABOR DISPUTE.**

February 15, 2011

Good afternoon, Co-Chairs Senator Prague, Representative Zalaski and the members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. The Service Employees International Union Connecticut State Council represents over 55,000 active members in Connecticut. SEIU is the states largest union with both public and private sector members.

SEIU supports **Committee Bill 5632**. Strikes in nursing home facilities are rare. When they do occur they are often resolved fairly quickly. A lockout of nursing home employees is even more rare, but when they do occur it means the workers are often in for a long and drawn out fight. Issues surrounding strikes and lockouts can be varied, but usually are precipitated by basic and very important issues concerning working conditions, unfair and disparate treatment, and pay and benefit levels. Sometimes lockouts occur when an employer would rather replace unionized workers with non-union workers.

Currently SEIU District 1199 members have been on strike and subsequently not brought back in to work at 4 nursing homes in Connecticut for 10 months. These homes are owned by the Spectrum chain.

The strike took place when management of the chain fired and discriminated against union members. After 4 months the union sent a letter notifying the company that they would return to work unconditionally. Spectrum to date has only reinstated some of the 400 workers. The tragedy is that Spectrum has hired replacement workers while workers who have long term relationships with patients are out on the streets in the cold. The quality of care, based on reports by patients and family members, has been vastly inferior to the work done by the union members.

Bill 5632 attempts to find a common sense way to resolve long term impasses so that patient care is not compromised. I would add that the appointment of a receiver should be considered when the union involved in the strike or lockout makes a formal request.

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